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C O N F I D E N T I A L CONAKRY 000525

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [ASEC](#) [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [GV](#)

SUBJECT: YOUTH MOVEMENT SPLINTERS IN THE FACE OF BRIBES AND  
FEAR OF RETALIATION

REF: CONAKRY 0520

Classified By: A/DCM SHANNON CAZEAU FOR REASON 1.4 B AND D

¶1. (C) SUMMARY. The broad-based youth movement that began to take shape last week (reftel) appears to be losing momentum. According to initial information from one of the main youth leaders, Thierno Balde, some of the youth groups have accepted bribes while others have backed down because of fear of retaliation. Despite the break-down in leadership, youth meetings continue. In addition, Monday morning started off with renewed spontaneous street demonstrations. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) Over the weekend, Prime Minister Souare appeared on national television and asked the population to be patient and calm with respect to the lack of public utilities. The Minister of Communication, Tibou Camara, conveyed the same message and then said that the government would continue to maintain law and order. In both cases, the government referred only to the random youth demonstrations of the past week, dismissing them as nothing more than spontaneous and unconnected events.

¶3. (C) Despite the public rhetoric, inside information suggests that members of the government were taking the growing youth movement as a significant threat, and were actively working behind the scenes to diffuse it. The owner of the Guinean Cement Company told the Charge that a prominent unidentified minister had called him and asked if he could seek refuge at the businessman's house if trouble developed. The businessman told the minister that he could, as well as his wife and children, but no one else would be allowed in, including the minister's bodyguards.

¶4. (C) According to Thierno, high-level political actors were actively courting various youth groups over the weekend and offering bribes, which some of the groups accepted. The bribes reportedly came directly from Prime Minister Souare, the former Minister of Finance Kassory Fofana, and the President of the National Independent Electoral Commission (CENI), Ben Sekou Syllah, among others.

¶5. (C) Thierno, who had dropped by the DATT's private residence on September 14, said that "everyone has been bought off." He said that of the nine groups that has already coalesced, six broke off, leaving only three groups, all of which are closely identified with the Fulani ethnic group. Thierno said that the youths had been trying to get the labor unions to support them, but that the unions had also been bought off, and had been refusing to meet with the youths.

¶6. (C) Fear also began to take its toll with a number of youths reportedly expressing concern that they would be killed. According to Thierno, one young leader broke down in tears at the last meeting, saying "the president is going to

kill us all; this is crazy, dangerous."

¶7. (C) Despite the breakdown in leadership, meetings continue. Thierno is still talking about holding a press conference, now planned for Thursday at 10:00, to publish the youth declaration as is, with however many signatures and endorsements they are able to obtain by then. As of 9:30 this morning, youths were already demonstrating around two key traffic circles. The anti-riot police had responded and were dispersing the crowds, possibly by firing bullets into the air.

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COMMENT  
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¶8. (C) Based on initial information, the planned youth movement appears to be losing momentum as various groups and leaders splinter off. Embassy plans to meet with some of these youth leaders in the next few days to get more detailed information about what might have transpired. In the meantime, there does not appear to be any slow down in spontaneous street demonstrations. END COMM  
BROKENSHIRE